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Pilot Mercury Fever Thermometer Take Back Program



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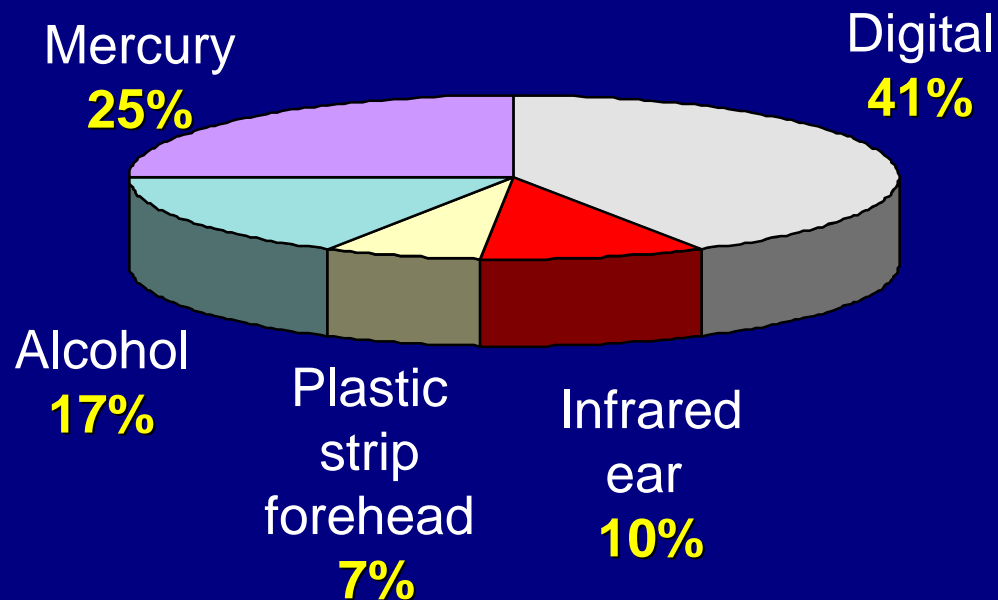
Mercury Thermometer Take Back

- Stakeholder consultations
- Give consumers a means to properly dispose of mercury thermometers.
- Retail pharmacies are the appropriate venue for a thermometer return.
- Educate public on other mercury products used in the home.



Fever Thermometers in Canadian Homes

There are about **2.7 million** mercury fever thermometers in Canadian homes* which is equal to approximately **2.7 tonnes**



Total: 10.7 million
thermometers

* based on Environics Focus Canada survey of 2014 Canadian homes



Broken Mercury Thermometers

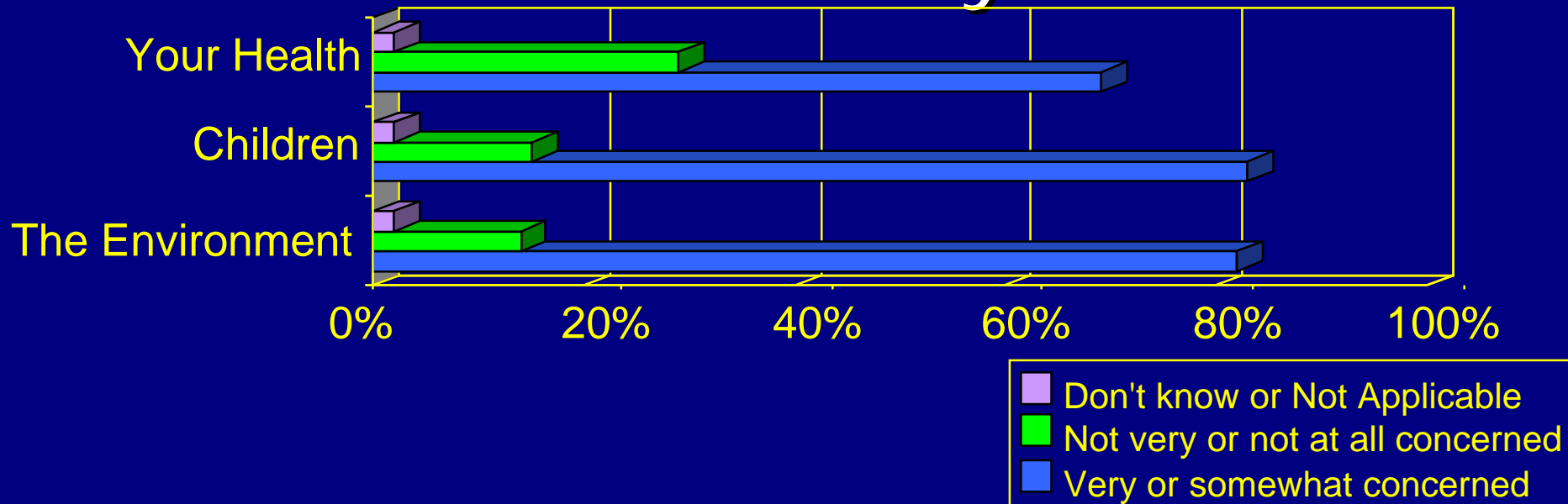
- 11% of those who have owned a mercury fever thermometer have broken one in the past five years.
- Up to 290,000 mercury fever thermometers could be broken in the next five years.
- Gaseous Elemental Mercury as an Indoor Air Pollutant ¹:
 - Exposure to mercury via indoor air is second only to fish consumption as a source of mercury in the general population.
 - Elevated mercury levels in study indicative of mercury from broken thermometers / thermostats.



What did people do with broken mercury thermometers?

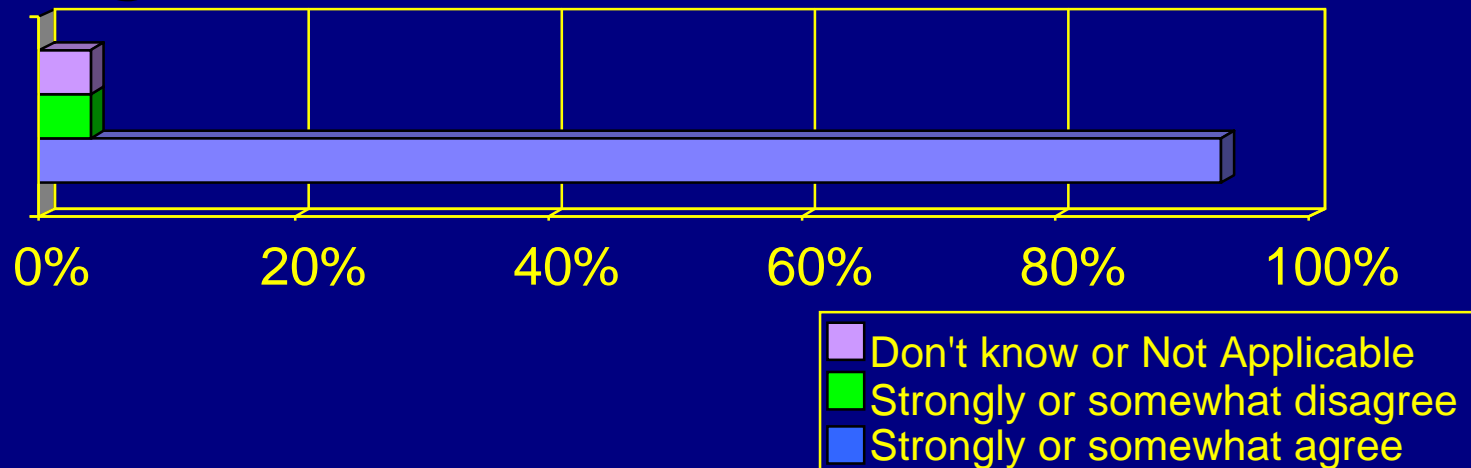
Disposal Method	% of sample
Disposed of in the sink or household garbage	57%
Collected by hand or by using a cloth	17%
Disposed of at hazardous or special waste depot	12%
Someone else took care of it	8%
Used a vacuum cleaner to clean up	1%
Other / Don't Know / Did Nothing	13%

How concerned are you about the effect of mercury on...?



Do you agree that...

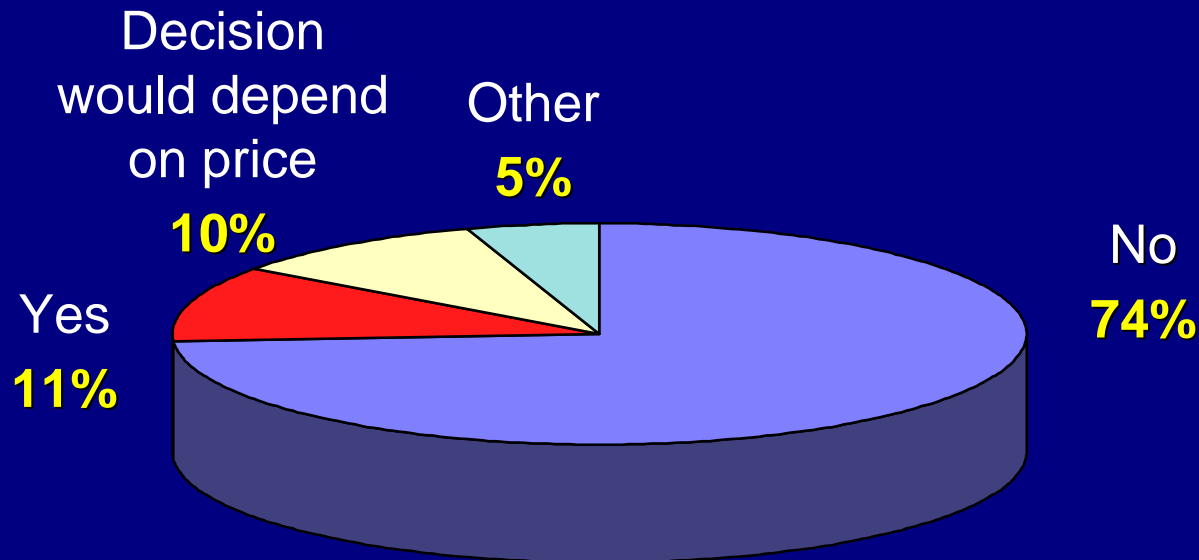
Mercury pollution makes some fish unsafe to eat.





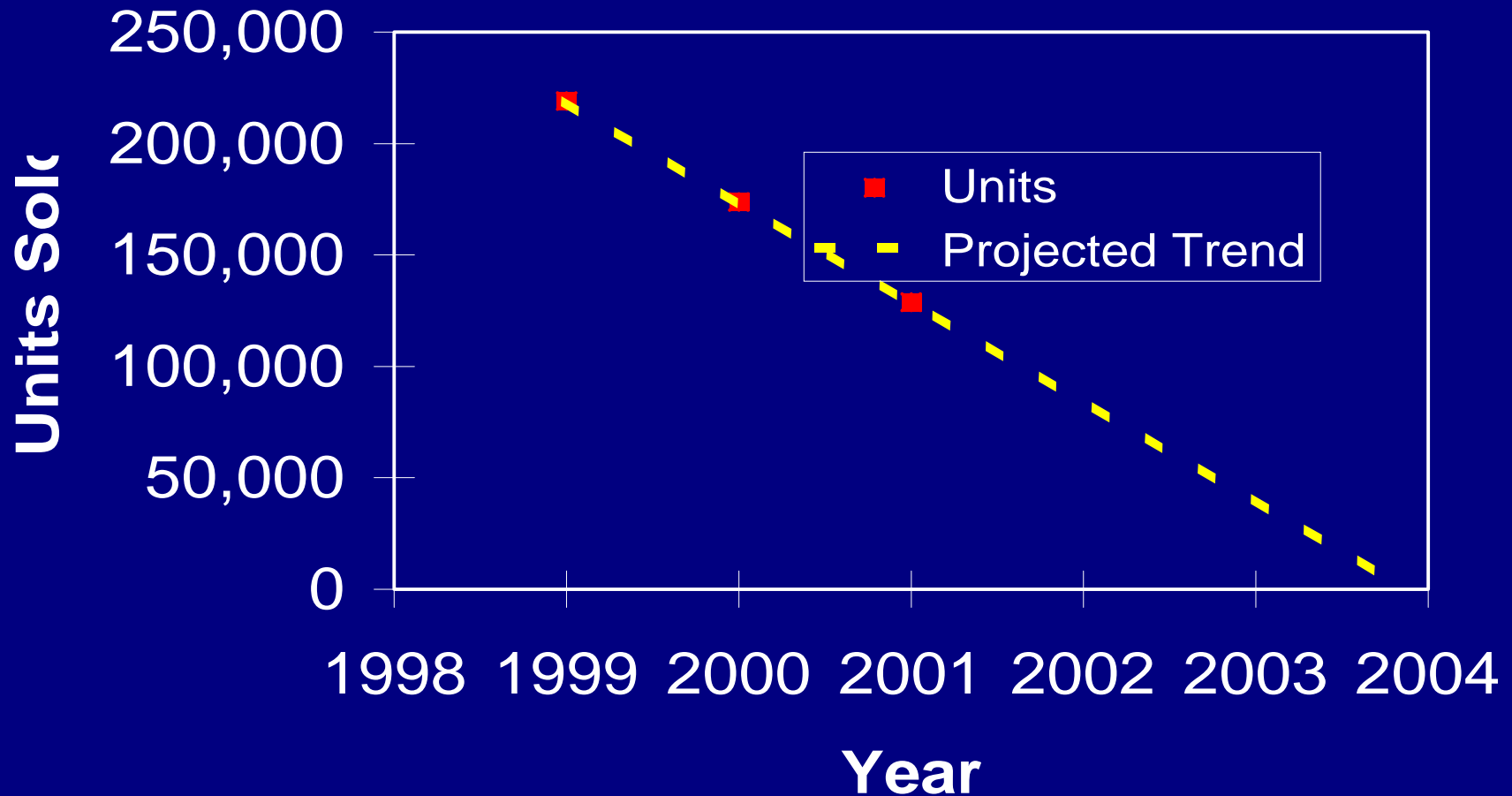
Educating Consumers

Would you have bought your mercury thermometer if you had known that mercury thermometers are potentially dangerous to children and the environment?





Mercury Fever Thermometer Sales





Pilot Program Outline

- Three Ontario cities with previous mercury program activities: Thunder Bay, Ottawa and London.
- February 15 to March 15, 2002.
- Pharmacists to collect and store thermometers.
- Hazardous Waste hauler collected thermometers for recycling or disposal.



Pilot Program Agreement

- **Retailers**

- Eliminate mercury thermometer sales;
- Provide employee time / training; and,
- Advertise, including coupons, as feasible.

- **EC offers to provide:**

- Collection materials with spill kits;
- Waste hauling and disposal;
- Pamphlets, other promotion;
- Public survey.



Pharmacy Participation

- Over 100 pharmacies participated.
 - Wal-Mart
 - Shopper's Drug Mart
 - Pharma-Plus, Rexall, Medicine Shoppe
 - Medi-Plus
 - Plus 12 independent pharmacies
- Many decided to participate "last minute".
- Therefore, limited additional promotion directly by pharmacies.

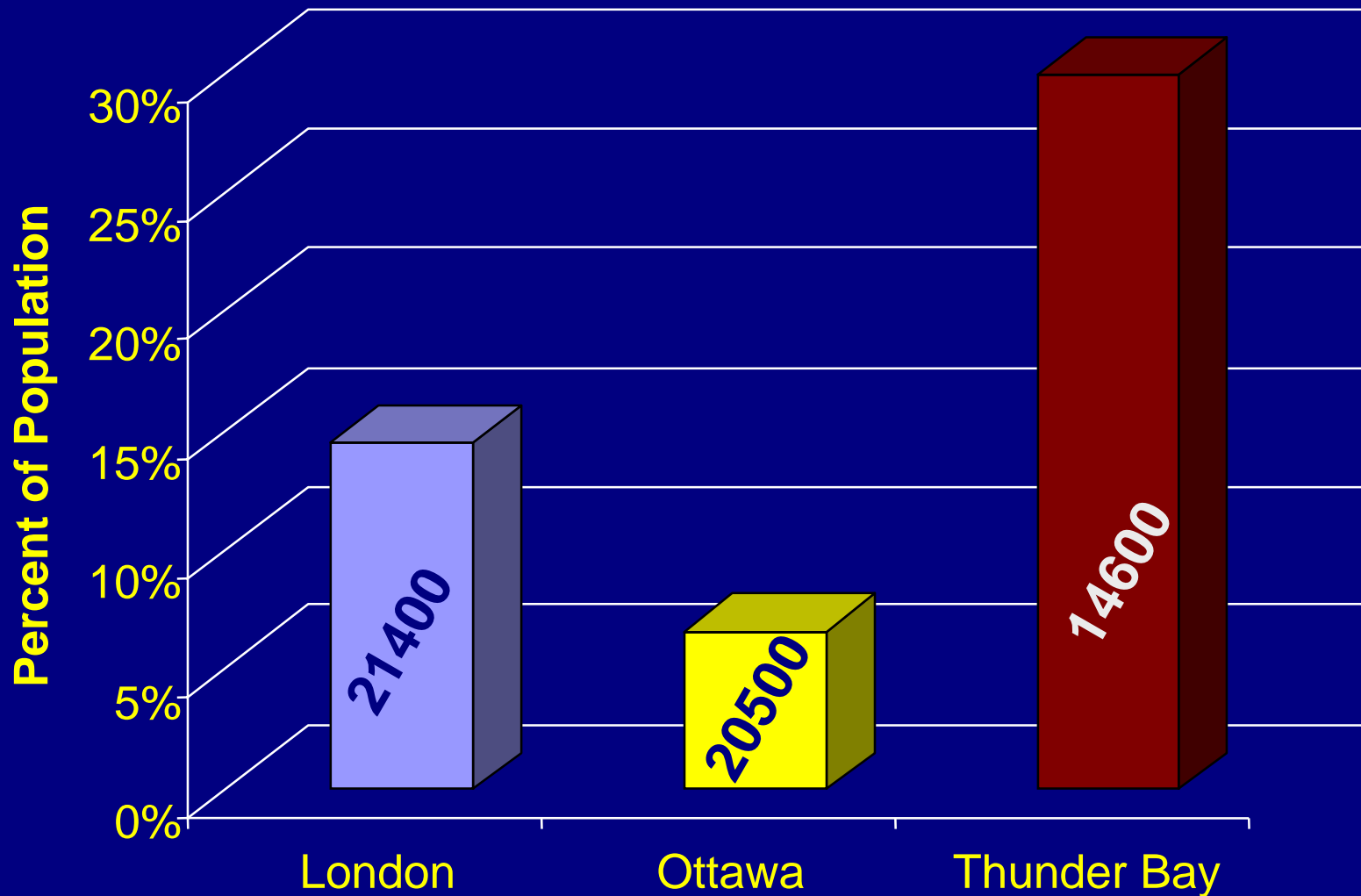


Results - Participation

- Overall, 1500 thermometers returned.
- Zero to 115 thermometers per pharmacy.
- Household participation rates:
 - London 2.9%
 - Ottawa 0.7%
 - Thunder Bay 2.5%



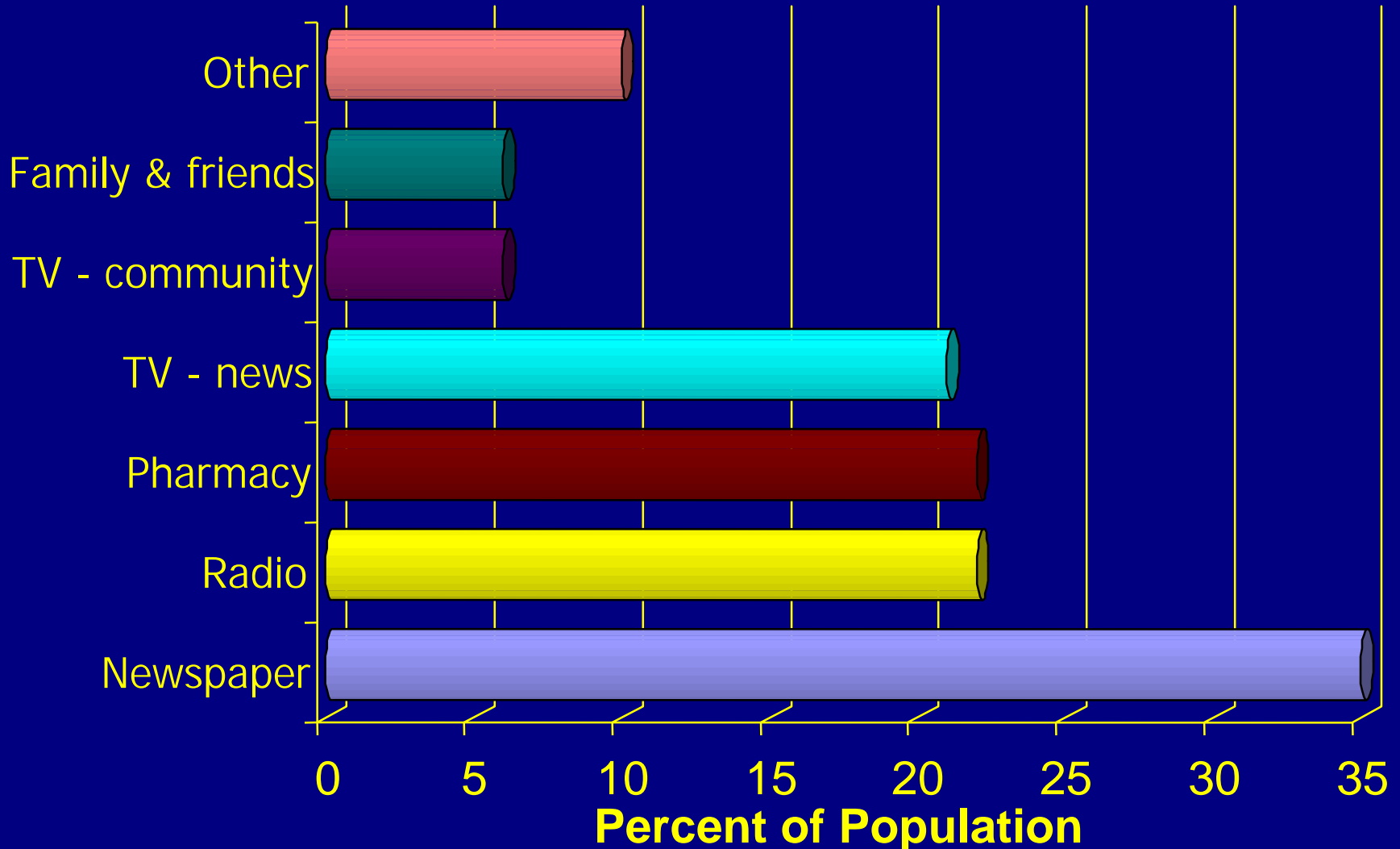
Results - Awareness





Results - Awareness

How did you hear about the program?

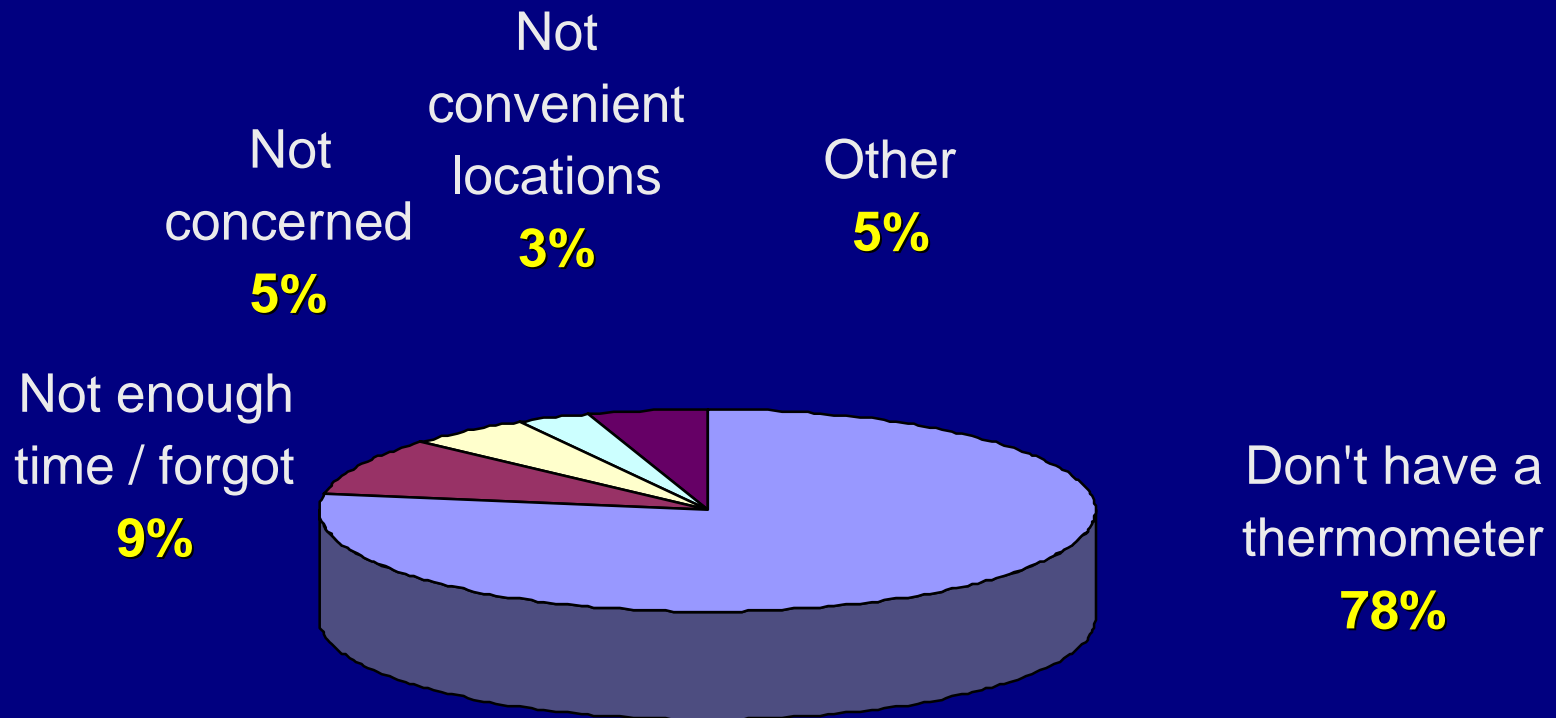





Results - Interest

Heard about the program, did not participate.

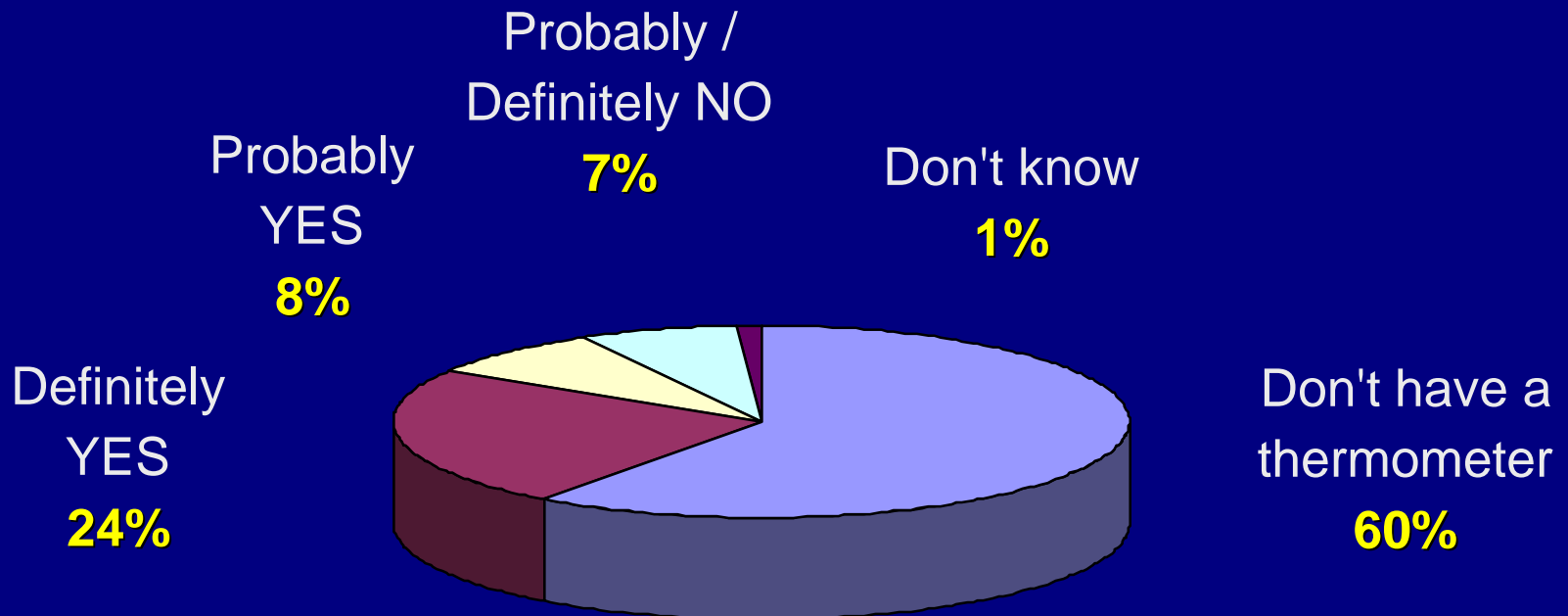
(75 out of 454 surveyed - 17 respondents who heard about the program owned mercury thermometers)





Results - Interest

Those that did not hear about the program. Would they want to participate? (*384 out of 454*)





"From the Field"

Responses from Pharmacists

- Customers brought other products - 16%
 - Accepted other products - 4%
- Displayed brochure - 41%
- Provided a coupon - 14%
- Want to participate again - 90%
- Don't want to participate:
 - Depends on head office - 7%
 - Toxic - 1%
 - Not our business - 1%
 - Too much trouble - 1%



Media Coverage

- Program launch in Ottawa with Minister of Environment.
- Newspaper articles, radio coverage.
- Local television - Rogers Cable.
- Advertising in Thunder Bay, courtesy of EcoSuperior.




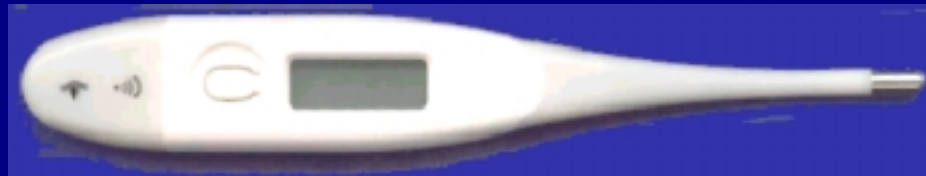
Challenges

- Waste transportation requirements
- Coupons
- Timing
- Handling mercury thermometers within pharmacies
 - Spills
 - Biomedical
- Cost and participation rate



Path Forward

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- Work towards eliminating sale voluntarily before next 'flu season
 - Now have an outline for developing national program.
 - Further work on cost reductions and exploring partners for National Take Back.





Mercury and the Environment Web Site

For More information please visit:



www.ec.gc.ca/mercury www.ec.gc.ca/mercure